

AN INVESTIGATION OF SOME OF THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL
CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC CHEATING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iii
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The General Problem and Hypothesis	
Major Hypothesis	
Specific Problems	
Specific Hypotheses	
The Assumptions	
Limitations of the Study	
Definition of Concepts	
A Review of Related Literature	
The Research Design	
II. SIZES OF HOMETOWN AND SOCIAL CLASS AS INDICES TO THE TENDENCY TO ENGAGE IN ACADEMIC CHEATING	23
III. THE RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGIOUS AND FAMILY TRAINING AND BASIC ORIENTATION TO CHEATING IN ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS	41
IV. CONCLUSIONS	56
Summary	
The Procedure	
Findings	
APPENDIX	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Relationship of Size of Hometown to Cheating	24
2. Percentage Relationship of Cheating and Family Income	27
3. Occupation of Father and Relationship to Cheating	30
4. Occupation of Mother and Relationship to Cheating	30
5. Education of Father and Relationship to Inci- dence of Cheating	35
6. Mother's Education and Relationship to Inci- dence of Cheating	36
7. Church Attendance and Incidence of Cheating	42
8. Parents' Attitude Toward Cheating	45
9. Disciplinary Practices and Tendency to Cheat	46
10. Percent Cheating by Purpose of College Education . . .	49
11. Importance of Four Criteria for Evaluating Other Students	52
12. Percentage Cheating by Orientation to College	53

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Academic cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty on the college campus run contrary to the fundamental values underlying the institution of higher education in America. A tradition of learning and scholarship that stresses conscientious scholarly endeavor, scrupulous regard for the academic efforts and contributions of others stands at the foundation of our institutions of higher learning. By virtue of this tradition, the college or university is concerned not simply with imparting knowledge and ideas, but also with instilling a sense of integrity about academic work in its students.

The prevalence of academic dishonesty represents failure on the part of the college to achieve one of its fundamental educational objectives. Since students who cheat have failed obviously to internalize standards of academic integrity, they may well have failed to master the academic and intellectual offerings of their college. Although other forms of misconduct may cause problems on the campus and represent failure to maintain desirable standards of conduct, they do not contradict the fundamental values of the institution.

Academic dishonesty also represents failure on the part of the student to receive the full benefits of the educational experience. The student, who develops no commitment to the value of honesty and

integrity in academic matters, spends little time or effort on his school work, passes through college with only a fragmentary and partial knowledge of the subject matter of his course and is deprived of many of the fruits of the educational process.

Moreover, the honest student suffers along with the dishonest one. To the extent that academic dishonesty prevails and goes undetected, students will receive grades for work they have not done and rewards to which they are not entitled. When good grades go to those who cheat successfully as well as to those who work hard on their studies, the grading system loses its power to motivate students to take their studies seriously and to spend time and effort on their school work. Students are deprived of an environment in which honest academic effort is a crucial path to success.

For the honest student, this presents a demoralizing situation. He is aware that many of his peers have cheated; in fact, some of them probably will have asked him to join them or help them out in an attempt to cheat. He sees others improving their grades by cheating and as a result is tempted to cheat. In short, on the campus at which academic dishonesty prevails, the honest student is deprived of the best setting for intellectual growth and the development of academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty also creates a problem for the instructors. It frustrates the instructor's effort to impart knowledge and to encourage respect for independent critical thinking among students. His work is made more difficult if he must always be on the lookout for cheating when he gives tests or makes assignments. Furthermore, he

has to be satisfied with limited success at teaching if the prevalence of dishonesty has weakened students' interest in school work--their motivation to study and their sense of academic integrity.

For the individual, academic cheating may represent an emerging personality problem. It is supposed to instill values and standards of conduct in those who set the standards that others adopt and to serve as examples for others to follow.

As a problem for the individual, for society as a whole and for the system of higher education, academic dishonesty merits attention. The problem may become even more serious if college attendance continues to rise and pressures for academic success grow more intense. From the incidents of cheating that have occurred on several campuses across the nation, one could say that it constitutes a serious problem of student discipline at a number of schools.¹ If we are to have an understanding of the problem and of how to combat it on the campuses, we must identify the sources and pressures contributing to academic dishonesty in college.

The General Problem and Hypothesis.--Many studies have shown that there are multiple factors involved in any form of generic deviant behavior. As an elaboration of Motza's thesis, the present study aims at investigating some of the possible correlates influencing a specific form of deviant behavior, namely academic cheating. More specifically stated, the problem is; what is the relationship between some of the socio-psychological factors in students' life spans and their propensity to cheat in academic pursuits?

¹F. W. Parr, "The Problem of Student Honesty," Journal of Higher Education, VII (June, 1966), 318-326.

As implied above, many independent variables in the socio-psychological life spans of students are basic to their present attitude toward generic dishonesty. Primary among these are (1) Place of birth and rearing (rural vs. urban), (2) Social class, (3) Religious orientation and (4) Value-orientation to college.

Major Hypothesis.--Since the variables relate to students' general attitudes toward dishonesty and integrity, the major hypothesis is that they relate to students' specific propensity for being dishonest in their academic pursuits. For example, it may well be that students who come from small towns are less likely to cheat than are those who come from large cities.

The study is conceived as an exploratory one, and, as such, it is difficult to predict the outcome. However, since the dependent variable and the independent variables have been isolated as a result of the relationships in the general theory, some tentative hypotheses can be offered.

Specific Problems.--In order to determine the relationship between some of the socio-psychological factors in students' life span and their propensity to cheat in academic pursuits, the following specific problems and hypotheses were investigated and tested:

1. Are students with rural or urban backgrounds most likely to cheat?
2. Are students from higher social-class or from lower social-class backgrounds most likely to cheat?

¹For a listing and description of the variables used in the study see page 20 Supra.

3. Are students whose backgrounds and family training reflect the most formal involvement in religious institutions or those students whose backgrounds and family training reflect the least formal involvement in religious institutions most likely to cheat?
4. Are students whose basic orientation toward college is social or are students whose basic orientation toward college is intellectual most likely to cheat?

Specific Hypotheses.--The specific hypotheses are:

1. Students from a rural background are less likely to cheat in their academic pursuits than are students from an urban background.
2. Students from higher social-class backgrounds are more likely to cheat in academic endeavors than are students from lower social-class backgrounds.
3. Students whose backgrounds and family training reflect the most formal involvement in religious institutions are the least likely to engage in academic dishonesty.
4. Those students whose basic orientation toward college is social rather than intellectual are more likely to cheat in academic pursuits.

The Assumptions.--Since assumptions are considered an essential feature in the building of a scientific study, the following assumptions were made.

1. Experiencing a more homogeneous relationship in their business and day-to-day transactions, rural residents will be found to cheat less than those with an urban background because rural residents associate with a more limited number of persons. This person-to-person relationship tends to create close-knit ties of friendship; it is believed that a person is less likely to cheat friends or others known personally. This type of conditioning is more likely to create in the individual a sense of honesty toward others than is the case for comparable conditions for the urban resident. Urban residents are involved in a heterogeneous type of relationship and may tend to disregard many of society's socially accepted norms and values.
2. Even though the lower classes are reputed to place less emphasis on strict adherence to norms than do the higher

classes, it is assumed that there is more academic dishonesty among students from the higher social-classes than there is from students from the lower classes. Students from higher-class backgrounds, then, may feel greater pressures to make good grades and at the same time be less committed to an honest approach to their course work than are students from lower-class backgrounds.

3. Religious background is a factor that reflects basic differences in attitudes and behavior. Religious orientation affects the social experiences that students have had and the judgments and adaptations that they have made to society. It also affects their ideas and beliefs about honesty and dishonesty.

Students with a strict religious background and a rigorous family training in honesty are less likely to cheat than are students who have had less rigorous training.

Strict religious and family training prior to entrance to college serves to deter cheating. This training is likely to cultivate a more sensitive conscience and the resulting feeling of guilt and mental anguish and effectively reduce the tendency toward cheating.

4. Some students are more attracted by social opportunities offered by college than they are by the intellectual opportunities offered by college. Those students who are social activities oriented are more likely to cheat than are those who are more intellectually oriented.

It is not difficult to speculate why cheating should be associated with an emphasis on social values at the expense of intellectual ones. Students who place value on the social aspects of college are not likely to spend much time on their studies and are apt to be in academic difficulty. Conversely, students who emphasize intellectual matters are not only likely to be serious about their studies, but they probably also have more respect for the "rules of the game," which define cheating as wrong.

Limitations of the Study.--Any interpretation of this study must include some consideration of its limitations--the relatively small number involved, the ease that cheating can be affected under the experiment conditions, the fact that sample members were virtually all on the freshman level, the fact that the setting was virtually an all-black

institution and any other unknown variables which may become apparent to one interested in the applicability of the findings to another specific setting. The study is representative of groups congruent to the sample and to setting described.

Definition of Concepts.--In the interest of consistency of meaning and precision of interpretation, it is deemed necessary to provide the definition of certain concepts used in the study. Within the context of the study, the following definitions apply:

Academic cheating or academic dishonesty.--These concepts which are used interchangeably, refer to a student's effort to deceive an instructor who is evaluating the student's academic performance.

Rural background.--refers to students reared in a town or community with less than 15,000 people. The researcher used the number 15,000 as a cut off for rural background, because in towns populated by more than 15,000 one is likely to experience an urban type of social-interaction.

Urban background.--applies to students reared in a city populated by more than 15,000.

Social class.--as used in the study refers to an arbitrary status group in which membership is conferred by characteristic status-conferring factors in the society (such as wealth, education and family background) and for which there is conscious recognition of affiliation.

Value orientation.--refers to the value attached to the intellectual and/or social aspects of college.

Religious orientation.--has reference to the level of participation in organized religious faiths, principally those denominations making up what is generally known as Christianity. The assumption is that the greater the level of participation the more one is influenced by the principles and doctrines.

Social activities-oriented.--refers to the tendency of the student to place greater value on participation in the more glamorous or overt social activity as opposed to activity of a pure, intellectual nature.

Intellectual-oriented.--As used herein is the antithesis of social activities-oriented; that is, the student has a tendency to place greater value on participation in activity of an intellectual nature.

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Judging from the coverage it has received in newspapers, both on the campus and in local communities, in popular magazines and in scholarly journals, the problem of academic dishonesty has not gone unrecognized. Yet little is known about the characteristics or background factors that tend to induce or to discourage academic dishonesty or integrity.

An impressive effort to uncover the causes of dishonesty and deceit in areas of activity including the academic realm was carried out in the 1920's by Hartshorne and May.¹ Their program of experimentation with grade school children represents a milestone in the application of empirical research methods to problems of social and ethical conduct. But, although the investigators used many imaginative and resourceful approaches in trying to identify and measure personality traits associated with deceit, they were forced to conclude that "the child's deception is as much a function of the particular situation in which he is placed as it is his own inner experience and training."²

Not long after Hartshorne and May published their work, William Campbell made an attempt to compare the effects of an honor system and

¹Hugh Hartshorne and Mark A. May, Studies in Deceit (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928).

²Ibid., p. 127.

a proctoring system on the cheating behavior of college students.¹ His study indicated that students are less likely to cheat if they are put on their honor than if they have the opportunity to cheat without being honor-bound. Canning conducted a study at a school while it was introducing an honor system. He had "before" and "after" measures and found that an honor system reduced cheating.²

Bowers,³ who did a comparison among a large number of colleges, found that the quality of the school, measured by such things as selectivity of admissions, faculty-student ratio and proportion of students living on campus was related negatively to the amount of cheating. Hartshorne and May,⁴ working with grammar school children, found the same kind of difference. For example, there was much less cheating at private than public schools.

According to Bowers,⁵ cheating is greater at larger schools. He also discovered that there was more cheating at co-ed schools, followed by all-male schools. All-girl schools had the least amount of cheating.

¹William G. Campbell, A Comparative Investigation of Students Under an Honor System and a Proctor System in the Same University (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1935).

²Ray R. Canning, "Does An Honor System Reduce Classroom Cheating? An Experimental Answer," Journal of Experimental Education, XXIV (June, 1956), 291-296.

³William J. Bowers, Student Dishonesty and Its Control in College (New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1964).

⁴Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928), p. 193.

⁵William J. Bowers, op. cit.

Concerning the various "character forming" organizations, such as the Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls, Parr¹ found these members cheated less than those of other such organizations. Hartshorne and May² studied this and found no consistent results. In some schools, belonging to such an organization actually led to increased cheating.

One of the most frequent and corroborated findings is that cheaters are of lower I. Q.³ One study reports no relationship with intelligence;⁴ but, since there are no studies which find cheating related to higher I. Q., one might reasonably accept the majority finding.

Similarly, cheaters tend to have lower grades. Their general grades are lower and their grades on the particular test used to study honesty are lower.⁵ Parr⁶ found that cheaters in college also tended to have lower grades in high school; Woods⁷ found previous failures among cheaters. It thus appears that those who cheat are those who need to cheat.

¹F. W. Parr, "The Problem of Student Dishonesty," Journal of Higher Education, VII (June, 1936), 318-326.

²Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928), p. 237.

³Blanch E. Atkins and Ruth E. Atkins, "A Study of the Honesty of Prospective Teachers," Elementary School Journal, XXXVI (April, 1936), 595-603.

⁴William G. Campbell and Helen L. Koch, "Student Honesty in a University With an Honor System," School and Society, XXXI (February, 1930), 232-240.

⁵Harold T. Christensen, "An Experiment in Honesty," Social Forces, XXVI (March, 1948), 298-302.

⁶F. W. Parr, op. cit., pp. 318-326.

⁷Roy C. Woods, "Factors Affecting Cheating and Their Control," Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science, XXIX (1957), 79-82.

Hartshorne and May¹ found that cheating was not related to physical condition, but Woods² discovered a relationship with frequent ill health.

The findings on mental health are more conclusive. It seems that cheaters tend to be more neurotic and more extraverted.³ They have more general emotional problems and are more suggestible.⁴ Hetherington and Feldman gave a battery of psychological tests to their subjects.⁵ They found cheaters showed higher repression (on the MMPI) and lower socialization and responsibility (on the CPI). According to these writers, cheaters tend to be passive-dependent in both the intellectual and social spheres; they seek out other people but are immature in their relationships.⁶

A number of studies have found no relationship between cheating

¹Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928), p. 138.

²Roy C. Woods, "Factors Affecting Cheating and Their Control," Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science, XXIX (1957), 79-82.

³J. D. Keehn, "Unrealistic Reporting as a Function of Extraverted Neurosis," Journal of Clinical Psychology, XII (January, 1956), 61-63.

⁴Ibid.

⁵E. Mavis Hetherington and Solomon E. Feldman, "College Cheating as a Function of Subject and Situational Variables," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 55 (August, 1964), 212-218.

⁶Ray R. Canning, "Does An Honor System Reduce Classroom Cheating? An Experimental Answer," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 24 (June, 1956), 291-296; Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928); Parr, "The Problem of Student Dishonesty," Journal of Higher Education, VII (June, 1936), 318-326.

and sex; but Hetherington and Feldman discovered that males cheated more.¹ They suggest that this might be because males are more motivated to do well in college. In either case there would seem to be nothing inherent in sex as such which would influence cheating behavior.

Age is more complicated. Two studies (Parr, 1936; Woods, 1957) found cheaters to be older;² one study discovered that younger people cheat more;³ and Woods found no relationship to age.⁴ Age can really be dealt with as two variables--age as compared with others in one's own grade and grade level in school.

On the former, Hartshorne and May found that cheating was related to being average in one's class.⁵ This seems perfectly reasonable and accounts for the ambiguity of results based on age as a pure variable.

As to the effect of actual grade level, the general finding seems to be that the lower the grade, the more cheating.⁶ Hartshorne and May, who seem to have studied this variable more extensively than the others

¹Hetherington and Feldman, "College Cheating as a Function of Subject and Situational Variables," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 55 (August, 1964), 212-218.

²Parr, "The Problem of Student Dishonesty," Journal of Higher Education, VII (June, 1936), 318-326.

Woods, "Factors Affecting Cheating and Their Control," Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science, XXIX (1957), 79-82.

³Bureau of Student Opinion, University of California (Los Angeles: 1963).

⁴Woods, "Factors Affecting Cheating and Their Control," Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science, XXIX (1957), 79-82.

⁵Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928), p. 302.

⁶Bureau of Student Opinion, University of California (Los Angeles: 1963).

mentioned, found that there was a relation to grade, but it was not related clearly to the level of the grade.¹ In some schools, one would find a particular grade exhibited more. It seems that the social atmosphere in the class was more important. However, Bonjean and McGee discovered that those who had been enrolled in the school longer cheated more, regardless of the particular grade.² The truth could lie somewhere between these two findings, the particular class is important; the longer a person has been enrolled in school, the more he knows the norms of his class and responds to their influence.

Where religion is concerned, Hetherington and Feldman found that those who claimed they attended church often cheated more;³ Bonjean and McGee found the opposite.⁴ Rawson, Rettig and Pasamanick discovered that Jews cheated slightly more than other groups.⁵

Parr found slightly more cheating among out of state students.⁶

¹Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928), p. 303.

²Charles M. Bonjean and Reece McGee, "Scholastic Dishonesty Among Undergraduates in Differing Systems of Social Control," Sociology of Education, 38 (Winter, 1965), 127-137.

³Hetherington and Feldman, "College Cheating as a Function of Subject and Situational Variables," Journal of Educational Psychology, 55 (August, 1964), 212-218.

⁴Bonjean and McGee, op. cit., pp. 127-137.

⁵Benjamin Pasamanick, Harve E. Rawson, Solomon Rettig, "The Relationship of Exploitative Manipulative Value Judgements to Exploitative Behavior Under Conditions of High and Low Ethical Risk," (Columbus: Ohio State University, Department of Psychiatry, Research Division, 1961).

⁶Parr, "The Problem of Student Dishonesty," Journal of Higher Education, VII (June, 1936), 318-326.

He also found a tendency for those brought up in smaller towns to be more dishonest. Bonjean and McGee found the opposite, an urban upbringing led to more cheating.¹

In comparing socio-economic status, Bonjean and McGee found that cheaters come from more "deprived" homes.² They have less educated parents and a lower family income; their fathers have more "lower class" jobs; their homes are more culturally deprived.³

Cheating occurs more when the external controls against it are weak. Canning found that people cheat more on self-grading when they use pencils than when they use pens.⁴ They cheat more when there is lax supervision by proctors.⁵

Bowers looked at students' perceptions of their peers' disapproval and found that this influenced cheating behavior very much.⁶ Whether it was close associates or the student body as a whole, people cheated

¹Bonjean and McGee, "Scholastic Dishonesty Among Undergraduates in Differing Systems of Social Control," Sociology of Education, 38 (Winter, 1965), 127-137.

²Ibid., p. 131.

³Woods, "Factors Affecting Cheating and Their Control," Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science, XXIX (1957), 318-326.

⁴Ray R. Canning, "Does An Honor System Reduce Classroom Cheating? An Experimental Answer," Journal of Experimental Education, XXIV (February, 1936), 291-296.

⁵William G. Campbell and Helen L. Koch, "Student Honesty in a University With an Honor System," School and Society, XXXI (February, 1930), 232-240.

⁶William J. Bowers, Student Dishonesty and Its Control in College (New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1964).

less when they saw themselves as surrounded by disapproval among their equals.

Hartshorne and May found that students resembled their friends in cheating, especially if the friends were in the classroom.¹

The picture that comes out of these many findings is actually quite consistent. The person who cheats is more likely to be one who is deprived, both in terms of his general background and his own personal characteristics. He is at a disadvantage in competing with others and thus presumably for these reasons has a greater need to cheat in order to keep up.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology in the present study was adopted from a similar study by Canning in which he demonstrates both a high degree of cheating under the present method of proctoring and a reduction in cheating through the introduction of the honor system.²

The fundamental objective of the experiment is to expose students to a situation where they can cheat very easily with little chance of getting caught. Social Science classes at Arkansas A. M. & N. College were used for this purpose.

The data collecting process is broken into four parts:

1. Gaining approval from the individual instructors involved.
2. Administering a questionnaire designed to measure independent variables.

¹Hartshorne and May, Studies in Deceit (New York, 1928), p. 304.

²Ray R. Canning, "Does an Honor System Reduce Classroom Cheating?" Journal of Experimental Education, XXIV (June, 1956), 291-296.

3. Grading students' tests and recording the score.
4. Regrading students' tests after they have had a chance to cheat.

The experiment was manipulated by using objective type mid-term examinations. Objective type mid-term examinations were administered to all four Social Science classes used in the study. The tests were made up and administered by the class instructor. After the examinations were collected from the students, each question was accurately scored, but with the scores being omitted from the test papers. A list with the correct grades was compiled for the permanent grade book. A number was placed on the student's test which was unobservable to him, but which matched the number on his questionnaire. At the next class session, the unmarked tests were returned to the students with the implication that the instructor has not had time to correct them. The students were told that they were grading their own papers in lieu of a classmate because the instructor felt that by placing each student on his or her honor he or she would be less likely to cheat.

After the students graded their papers, the papers were collected and the names cut off the tests by the researcher. Any changes made upon the examination papers by the students were recorded on the tests.

Cheating and non-cheating scores and questionnaire information were then categorized and analyzed. The students were informed that they had participated in an experiment after all classes had gone through the experimental procedure. At the end of manipulations, the instructor had the original grade scored by each student while the researcher had a cheating score for each individual identified by number only. Thus, even if the instructor wanted to know who cheated and who did not within

the class, it was not possible to ascertain in the absence of the list of names and numbers.

The tabulated differences were used as data for the study. The tabulated differences did not involve any complicated inferential statistics; instead they involved only a simple comparison obtained by counting the number of occurrences.

The Sample.--The population for the study consisted of 240 students at the Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College (AM&N) located in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The 240 subjects represented all of the students registered in four sections of Introduction to Social Science--a freshman service course and a part of the general education core curriculum at the college. These classes were used for two reasons: (1) as an instructor in the Department of Sociology, it was easy to arrange co-operation from colleagues, and (2) the nature of the Social Science course is such that the objective type examination, necessary for a reasonably successful experiment, can be administered easily. The students were unaware at the time of registration that the classes would be the subject of an experiment. Virtually all of the students were of the freshman level; however, 16 students of other undergraduate levels were enrolled.

Since the sample was drawn exclusively from the student population of AM&N College, it is deemed necessary to inject here a brief statement concerning the institution, particularly as it relates to the clientele it serves. The Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College was established as a branch of the State University of Arkansas, a land-

grant institution.¹ Its establishment was in the interest of the "convenience and well-being of the poorer classes." Davis concludes that the college "was founded for people of the lower socio-economic groups, of limited cultural backgrounds."² Until the fall of 1965 the student body was made up entirely of members of the Negro race. To date AM&N College is a predominantly Negro Land-Grant College. Of the 3100 students enrolled during 1967-68, 31 are non-Negro. There were no non-Negro students registered in the four sections used in the experiment.

Collection of the Data.--The data were collected by means of a questionnaire (see Appendix). The choice of the questionnaire was based on many considerations. The very nature of the independent variables--economic level, importance of religion in family unit, rural background, urban background and value orientation--is of such that the information must be obtained from the subject, in the absence of a long-term controlled setting. Some reasonable measure of uniformity is desired and while one cannot be assured absolutely that each individual subject will extract exactly the same meaning from the questions, one can be certain that his responses are to the same inquiries. Furthermore, there may be more honesty in his response to inquiries of a personal nature in a questionnaire than to an interviewer (the interview and the questionnaire being the most practical methods of securing the basic data).

Then there is the matter of numbers. Two hundred and forty subjects, all of whom were students in Social Science were used. The

¹Lawrence A. Davis, "The Philosophy of A. M. and N. College," Student Handbook (Pine Bluff, 1965).

²Ibid.

existence of an experimental situation was not to be made known immediately to them, and the contact was limited to the normal student-teacher relationship until such time that all the data had been gathered. Hence, the questionnaire, which could be rather quickly circulated, completed, gathered and later analyzed, was the method least likely to suggest a research setting.

When the questionnaire was presented, the students were told that the information was being collected as a part of a nationwide study. They were further told that the answers given should be as accurate and honest as possible in that researchers had no personal interest in them and the information could have no possible effect within the confines of the class or school.

After the questionnaires were administered to each class separately, they were coded and filed for future reference.

Objective type mid-term examinations were administered to all class sections used in the study. After the examinations were collected, each was scored accurately and the grades entered into the instructor's record. Later the examinations were returned to the students unmarked. The students were told that the instructor had not had time to check them. Each student was asked to mark his own paper and return it to the instructor. The papers were then carefully rechecked and scored again. The data were then gathered for analysis.

Only after the data were collected were the students advised that they had participated in an experiment on academic cheating. They were assured, however, that no information regarding any individual was to be released nor would they be penalized in any way.

Description of the Variables.--The following independent variables were tested as contributing factors to cheating: (1) Rural background versus urban background, (2) Social class, (3) Value orientation and (4) Religious orientation.

The following items on the questionnaire were used as indicators of the independent variables:

Rural or Urban.--The answers given to questions, numbers one and two, were used to indicate whether or not a student is from a rural or urban area.

Social class.--The indices used to measure social class in the study are the occupation, education and income of the parents of students used in the sample. Two social classes were differentiated, middle class and lower class. Those students whose parents are blue-collar workers or unskilled workers earning less than \$7,500 per annum were assigned lower class status. Those students whose parents' income exceeds \$7,500 per annum are white-collar workers, professionals and/or have completed at least a four year undergraduate program were assigned higher class status.

Items numbers three through six on the questionnaire served as indicators of social class.

Religious orientation and Family training.--The indices used to indicate religious orientation and family training were frequency of church attendance, attitude of parents toward academic cheating and disciplinary action of parents.

Items numbers seven through eleven served as indicators of religious orientation.

Value orientation.--The indices of value orientation to college are purpose of college, interest in intellectual problems and involvement in campus life. The indices used to ascertain students' orientation to college are basically the same as those employed by Bowers in his study of value orientation and cheating.¹

The answers received from items eleven through fifteen were used to measure students' value orientation to college.

¹William J. Bowers, Student Dishonesty and Its Control in College (New York: The Bureau of Applied Research, 1964), p. 262.

In measuring the student's orientation to college, the study employed data on the criteria students used in evaluating their peers to indicate where they themselves stood along the continuum represented by educational and intellectual goals at one extreme and social goals at the other. The question (14) was worded as follows: "How much does each of the following contribute to a student's standing in your eyes?" Two of the criteria provided reflect social values. These are "active social life," "lots of dates" and "good personality and fun to be with." Two others reflect "intellectual problems" and "appreciation of the arts."

To construct the measure of orientation, separate indices of the social and intellectual dimensions were made by combining "participation in campus activities", "active social life (lots of dates)", "good grades" and "interest in ideas and intellectual problems." This was done by dichotomizing each item (to make groups as nearly equal as possible) and assigning a score of "1" to high importance and "0" to low importance. Thus, the two social criteria will yield an index of social orientation with scores of 0, 1 and 2, and the two intellectual criteria will yield a similar index of intellectual orientation. These two dimensions of orientation are analytically independent in that students may consider one, the other, both or neither as important. The cross-classification of these two dimensions provided the typology of students' orientation to college.

Students' degree of commitment to intellectual values was inferred from their responses to the question (12) about the most important purpose of college. They were presented with six options, including

development of their social skills, occupational preparation, acquiring basic education and appreciation of ideas.

The first three items, referring to social skills, occupation and family life, have little to do with strictly academic or intellectual concerns. Students who saw these as the most important goals of their education were not evaluating education in its own right, but only as a means to some other end.

Thus, students who gave primary importance to developing their interpersonal skills, occupational training or preparation for marriage are more likely to have a social orientation to college; students choosing any of the last three items, in contrast, are more likely to have an intellectual orientation. This conclusion rests on the assumption that the purposes students attribute to higher education reflect their basic orientation to college; that is, whether they give primacy to the social or intellectual aspects of college life.

CHAPTER II

SIZES OF HOMETOWN AND SOCIAL CLASS AS INDICES TO
THE TENDENCY TO ENGAGE IN ACADEMIC CHEATING

As has been stated already, this study attempts to assess the relationship between some of the socio-psychological factors in the student's life span and his propensity to cheat in academic pursuits. Conclusions were reached based on the relative strength of the indices used and actual cheating. A more refined statistical analysis would be required to evaluate the precise contribution of the various determinants.

The purpose here, however, was to locate and roughly evaluate some of the socio-psychological factors contributing to academic dishonesty in college. The primary concern was the relationship of the physical environment provided by the hometown (for example, rural versus urban) to cheating; the relationship between education and income of the parents and cheating; the relationship between the religious and family training background of students and cheating; and, the relationship between the basic orientation of the student towards college and cheating.

It was hypothesized that (1) students from rural backgrounds are less likely to cheat than are students from an urban background, (2) students from higher social-class backgrounds are more likely to cheat

than are students from lower social-class backgrounds.

Hometown and cheating.--Students from rural areas are less likely to cheat than are students from urban areas. This hypothesis was based on the assumption that the close person-to-person relationships characteristic of rural areas are likely to create a sense of honesty in the individual that will carry through his academic endeavors.

TABLE 1
RELATIONSHIP OF SIZE OF HOMETOWN TO CHEATING

Size of Hometown	Number by Hometown	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Less than 2500	62	25.8	27	43.5
2500 - 5000	87	36.2	68	78.2
5000 - 15,000	46	19.2	24	52.2
15,000 - 50,000	24	10.0	15	62.5
Over 50,000	21	8.7	10	47.6
Rurals a	195	81.2	117	60.0
Urbans b	45	18.8	25	55.5
Total	240	100.0	142	99.2

a categories one through three combined

b the last two categories combined

However, the data did not support the hypothesis. Sixty percent of those from a rural background cheated as opposed to fifty-five and five-tenths percent of those from an urban background. Close analysis of the table reveals that the lowest percentages of cheating occurred on the extreme ends, forty-three and five-tenths percent among those from communities of less than twenty-five hundred persons and forty-seven and six-tenths percent of those from cities with a population of over fifty thousand. The highest percentage, seventy-eight and two-tenths percent, occurred not among those from the larger communities

but instead among those from communities between twenty-five hundred and five thousand.

The fact that the lowest level of cheating was among the group from the smallest communities is consistent with the hypothesis but the findings in general tend to reject the hypothesis.

The unanticipated low incidence of cheating among the students from communities of over 50,000 is due possibly to preparation in better schools which reduced the need to engage in academic cheating. This might be especially true in that the competition is principally the student from the smaller and poorer school district that affords only limited experiences.

On the other hand, looking again at the group from communities of less than twenty-five hundred, it is evident that the least cheating occurred. It should be noted here that the term rural, for the purposes of this study, was defined as those communities with a population of less than fifteen thousand despite the fact that the United States Census defines a population center as rural with less than two thousand five hundred persons.

At first blush, the most perplexing finding that is inconsistent with the hypothesis is the extremely high incidence of cheating among students from communities with a population between twenty-five hundred and five thousand. It is suggested that these students are aware of the value of a college education and a better than average college transcript, but are victims of inferior high school curricula afforded by their inadequately financed school districts; and consequently, they are not prepared sufficiently to immediately compete favorably with the

products of Arkansas' larger and better financed schools. Therefore, they resort to cheating in an attempt to attain a competitive class standing until such time that they either overcome their deficient background or abandon college.

This suspicion or assumption appears reasonable after a survey of the ratings of predominantly black schools in Arkansas. The Arkansas Almanac¹ reveals that of one hundred-thirty-six predominantly black schools, sixteen are accredited by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, the top regional rating agency. Of these sixteen, ten are located in eight of Arkansas' ten largest cities. Seven of this ten are located in Arkansas' five largest cities; Little Rock, Fort Smith, North Little Rock, Pine Bluff and Hot Springs.

Of the remaining predominantly Black Arkansas public schools, twenty-two were unrated, thirty-six were rated "C" (the lowest rating the State awards) and only 36 received the State Department of Education's "A" rating despite the fact that the State's Department of Education standards for "A" rating are significantly lower than the requirements for North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges approval. Considering these factors, the findings become less perplexing.

The findings indicate that the first hypothesis must be rejected. Academic dishonesty was not found to be most prevalent among students from urban areas. It appears that no direct correlation exists between propensity to engage in academic cheating and the size of hometown.

¹Arkansas Almanac, Arkansas Almanac, Incorporated, 1966.

Instead one must conclude that other variables must be analyzed in order to find a means of predetermining one's propensity to engage in academic cheating.

Income and cheating.--The second hypothesis offered is that students from higher social class status (higher family incomes, education levels of parents or professional parents) backgrounds are more likely to cheat in academic endeavors than are students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Information was gathered on the level of education and occupation of both parents; however, the students were not asked to isolate the income of mothers and fathers. The family income was the only figure used. Therefore, education and occupation data are divided into two areas; income is analyzed from only the standpoint of the family unit.

The family income measure is dealt with first. Table 2 indicates the incidence of cheating as related to family income. A quick survey

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE RELATIONSHIP OF CHEATING AND FAMILY INCOME

Family Income	Total Number	Number of Cheaters	Percent Cheating
Less than \$3,000	65	32	49.1
\$3,000 - \$5,000	105	70	66.6
\$5,000 - \$7,500	40	23	57.5
\$7,500 - \$10,000	19	12	63.2
\$10,000 - \$15,000	8	4	50.0
\$15,000 and over	3	1	33.3
Total	240	142	59.2
Less than \$7,500	210	125	59.5
Over \$7,500	30	17	56.7
Less than \$5,000	170	102	60.0
Over \$5,000	70	40	57.1
Total	240	142	59.2

of Table 2 reveals that the greatest propensity to cheat did not prevail in the higher income brackets. As a matter of fact, the lowest percentage (33.3 percent) of cheating occurred in the fifteen thousand per year and over category. The small number in this category (three) as opposed to the number in the group tested (two hundred and forty) may somewhat diminish the value of this figure for analytical purposes; however, when one combines those with income below seventy-five hundred dollars per annum and those above the same figure and makes a comparison one still finds a greater propensity to cheat among the lower income bracket; 59.5 percent cheated as opposed to 56.7 percent in the upper income group.

By moving the line one step lower for comparison, it is apparent that, of those with family income of less than five thousand dollars, 60 percent (170/102) cheated; of those with family income of five thousand or more per year, 57.1 percent cheated. In order to establish a line of demarcation where the upper income bracket's cheating percentage is higher, the line has to be drawn below the poverty level, that is, less than three thousand dollars per annum.

Why would the lower income groups tend to cheat more than the upper income groups even though the latter appears to be more success-oriented? One possible reason was discussed in relation to the first hypothesis, that is, preparation for college. The intellectual environment that exists in the lower income home is least likely to produce a product prepared to compete favorably in college level work. Neither good books, relevant and sophisticated periodicals nor basic research volumes are likely found in the lower income home.

During the National Conference on Educational Objectives for the Culturally Disadvantaged¹ in 1967, Dr. Robert J. Havighurst, professor of education at the University of Chicago, cited six correlates of poverty in the United States. These are: (1) a restricted language used in the home; (2) low level of education of parents and general lack of reading habits, reading skills and reading materials in the possession of the parents; (3) parents do not set an example of achievement through education; (4) parents do not hold high educational aspirations for the children; (5) residential neighborhood is mainly occupied by people who are like their parents in socio-economic characteristics; and (6) poor health and inadequate health services reduce school attendance and reduce the vigor of school children.

It is highly probable that combinations of these correlates along with others, such as inferior schools in the smaller agrarian oriented communities, have produced students that tend to rely on cheating to compete favorably in college level work.

Other measures were also used and must be examined before any final conclusions can be reached.

Occupation and cheating.--The next of these measures explored is parents' occupational classification and its relationship to academic cheating. This measure was applied to mother and father separately. The findings are reflected in Tables 3 and 4. Table 3, dealing with

¹Education for the Culturally Disadvantaged. Proceedings of the National Conference on Educational Objectives for the Culturally Disadvantaged, South Central Regional Educational Laboratory (Publisher) United States Office of Education.

fathers, reports only 232 fathers. The reasons are as follows; one did not know his father and seven did not know where their fathers were nor what they did to earn a living.

TABLE 3
OCCUPATION OF FATHER AND RELATIONSHIP TO CHEATING

Occupation Classification	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Unskilled	153	65.9	94	61.4
Semi-skilled	47	20.3	26	55.3
Skilled and Professional	32	13.8	18	56.25
Totals	232	100.0	138	59.4

TABLE 4
OCCUPATION OF MOTHER AND RELATIONSHIP TO CHEATING

Occupation Classification	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Unskilled	175	72.9	105	60.0
Semi-skilled	33	13.7	18	55.0
Skilled and Professional	32	13.4	19	59.0
Totals	240	100.0	142	59.16

When one examines both Table 3 and Table 4, one finds that the highest percentage of cheating occurred among those with parents engaged in unskilled occupations and those most likely to be among the lower social-class groups in their respective communities. One does not find the greatest incidence of cheating among those with parents engaging in skilled and professional occupations. It is from this

group that one is most likely to find members of the higher social class groups in their respective communities. Furthermore, the lowest incidence of cheating was among those students with semi-skilled parents, (Tables 3 and 4).

These findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis in question which in addition to declaring that the higher social classes are most likely to cheat (due to the pressure to succeed) presupposed that cheating would decline as the demands of the social class diminished. Following this supposition through to its logical end one would expect to find that the least cheating would occur in the lowest social class group--the group most likely to include the majority of the unskilled.

Lloyd Warner, in his writing and research, advances conclusions which shed a great deal of light on this matter.¹ He notes a barely distinguishable upper-lower class composed of "poor but honest workers." These are most often semi-skilled or unskilled persons who by most objective measures show few differentiating characteristics from the adjacent lower-lower class. There is, however, and he notes, a slight but significant difference in their spending pattern. They have a greater tendency to invest in education than in amusement; they do not spend as much on food. This, he suggests, reflects their feelings about doing the right thing, of being respectable and rearing their children to do better than they have and of making them more selective in their spending.

¹W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lent, The Social Life of a Modern Community, Vol. I, "Yankee City Series" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 287-300, cited by W. Lloyd Warner, Social Class in America (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1949 and New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 151.

Herbert H. Hyman, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, in his paper on "The Value System of Different Classes" states that money is the primary differential in opportunity for success but acknowledges value systems as more subtle psychological factors which influence success. He notes that frustration among the lower classes caused by realistic evaluation of the chances, or lack of chances, for success in the socio-economic and political community invites deviant behavior which in turn reduces any chances they may have through voluntary action to rise above their social class.¹

At the same time, Hyman acknowledges that the above conclusion, which was set forth by R. K. Merton,² is not a phenomenon which is absolute. It requires that the individual or individuals realize that the means to success are beyond their grasp, otherwise the frustration and subsequent deviance may not occur. Hyman cites Farber³ as authority for the latter proposition.

Moving from Farber's basic proposition, Hyman attempted to gather empirical evidence on the degree to which individuals in different strata value the means to the culturally prescribed goal of success. One of the means he considered, that is relevant here, is a college education.

¹Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value System of Different Classes," Class, Status and Power, ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), reprinted in The Study of Society, An Integrated Anthology, ed. Peter I. Rose (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 371-390.

²R. K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," reprinted as Chapter IV, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1949).

³M. L. Farber, "Suffering and Time Perspective of the Prisoner," 20, (University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare, 1944), 155-227.

Nearly three thousand persons interviewed, representing all levels of income, occupational classifications and education levels, were asked if they considered a college education as essential to advancement. Rating the group by economic level, 68 percent of the wealthy and prosperous recommended a college education as opposed to 52 percent of the middle class and 39 percent of the lower class. Among the various occupational classifications, 74 percent of the professionals recommended a college education as opposed to 53 percent of the skilled laborers and 35 percent of the unskilled non-farm laborers. Analyzing the group responses by highest education achieved, it was found that 72 percent of those who themselves had attended college recommended college as an essential to advancement as opposed to 55 percent of those who attended high school and 36 percent of those who only attended grammar school.¹

Apparently, the lower one's socio-economic status the more likely he is to realize that certain means are beyond his grasp. He experiences subsequent frustration and resorts to some deviance. One in this group begins to rationalize away whatever inherent aspirations which he may have once had. He concludes that college, among other potential vehicles of mobility within the class structure, is not an essential to advancement. Not because it is not in fact such, but because he has concluded that a college education is not within his grasp.

This phenomenon, however, is not an absolute truism. If it were, one could never expect any upward mobility from the lower socio-economic

¹Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value System of Different Classes," Class, Status and Power, ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), reprinted in The Study of Society, An Integrated Anthology, ed. Peter I. Rose (New York: Random House, 1967).

class members. But both Hyman¹ and Warner² acknowledge a group within the lower classes that defy this theory. Hyman characterized them as those who do not realize that the system rules against them and Warner called them "poor but honest workers" who have strong feelings about doing the right thing, being respectable and rearing their children to do better than they have. Hyman, agreeing with Merton, notes that "these values as measured among adults only take on relevance insofar as they would be passed on to the children."³

It may be assumed that a great many of the students in the middle groups in Tables 3 and 4 that cheated few are from this group of "poor but honest" folks. They are students who have been inactivated thoroughly in the merits of doing the right thing and being respectable; students who do not know that the system works against the ultimate success of members of their socio-economic class.

On the other hand, using the same logic and authority, one may conclude that the group within the measure where the greatest amount of cheating occurred, those with unskilled parents, represents the bulk of those persons whose socio-economic status has led them to conclude that the necessary ingredients for success are beyond their grasp. Thus, as a result of the subsequent frustration, they are most likely to resort to deviant behavior, in this instance, cheating in academic endeavors.

¹Herbert H. Hyman, op. cit.

²W. Lloyd Warner, The Social Life of a Modern Community, Vol. I, "Yankee City Series" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), passim.

³Herbert H. Hyman, op. cit.

The final measure employed in testing the second hypothesis deals with the education of parents and its relation to the incidence of academic cheating. Tables 5 and 6 represent the results as they relate to fathers and mothers respectively. It is assumed that the higher the education level of the parents the more likely the family enjoys a high social class standing in their given communities.

TABLE 5
EDUCATION OF FATHER AND RELATIONSHIP TO INCIDENCE
OF CHEATING

Education Level	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Did not finish high school	168	72.4	101	60.1
Finished high school	23	10.0	13	56.5
Attended college	41	17.6	24	58.4
Total	232*	100.0	138	59.4
1 and 2 combined	191	82.4	114	59.6

*One did not know father, seven did not know where father was. Therefore, eight of the total group of 240 could not be reported here. Eighty-two and four tenths percent of the fathers reported here had a maximum of a high school education.

Leonard Broom, of the University of Texas, states that the selected attributes for measurement of social class should be, as far as possible, indicators of positions crucial to the maintenance of social

order.¹ By this criterion, Broom says, Lenski's attributes of occupation, income, education and ethnicity² are well chosen for contemporary American society. In other societies, Broom suggests that even age or physical strength may be necessary.³

TABLE 6
MOTHER'S EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIP TO INCIDENCE
OF CHEATING

Education Level	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Did not finish high school	147	61.3	91	61.9
Finished high school	45	18.7	24	53.3
Attended college	48	20.0	27	56.3
Total	240	100.0	142	59.2
1 and 2 combined	192	80.0	115	59.9

Eighty percent of the mothers had a maximum of a high school education.

Berelson and Steiner characterize the benefit of education as follows: "Sociologically, the benefits of prolonged education go

¹Leonard Broom, "Social Differentiation and Stratification," reprinted in Sociology Today Problems and Prospects, ed. Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom and Leonard S. Cattrell, Vol. II, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 431.

²Gerhard Lenski, "Status Crystallization: A Non-Vertical Dimension of Social Status," American Sociological Review, 19 (December, 1954), 405-13, and "Social Participation and Status Crystallization," American Sociological Review, 21 (December, 1956), 458-64.

³Leonard Broom, op. cit.

beyond the strictly intellectual or occupational opportunities that schooling brings. For the educational system is in itself partly class-based in the sense that the further one goes, the higher the average class level of the students. There is an opportunity for lower class or ethnic members to learn upper-class behavior along with the schooling itself: how to dress, what proper etiquette is, the appropriate tastes and beliefs and all the rest."¹

To attempt to measure the social class of the test group, income, occupation and education were used. It was felt that for any group this would represent reasonably valid indicators, and for a predominantly Negro group, as is the case here, whose effective society is most likely void of the more subtle social class indicators such as source of money and "old family" status, et cetera would be even more valid. It was felt that the effect of education on and within this group would be congruent to the sociological benefits advanced by Berelson and Steiner.²

Gould³ found in his study of sociological determinants of goal striving that aspirations among minority ethnic groups often far exceed their achievements, suggesting that those of the lower class who do orient themselves to upper class patterns such as attending college may be more extreme in their goal striving. We can agree and further suggest that any member of the Negro minority is more likely to be among

¹ Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior, Shorter ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), p. 80.

²Ibid.

³R. Gould, "Some Sociological Determinants of Goal Striving," Journal of Social Psychology, XIII (October, 1941), 461-73 cited by Hyman, op. cit.

the higher social-class groups in his given community than his majority counterpart. However, one does not suggest that his merely finishing college will assure a high social class status in the community in its larger sense. This statement presupposes that one concedes without argument that the Negro generally exists in two distinct communities, one composed almost entirely of members of his own ethnic and racial minority and the other encompassing the total community. Often his importance in one is measured in terms of his position in the other.

The data set forth in Tables 5 and 6 indicate that those members of the group tested whose parents had the least education (did not finish high school) showed the greatest propensity to cheat. This was true when the level of education of the father was considered (101/168 cheated or 60.1 percent) or the level of the education of the mother (91/147 cheated or 61.9 percent) was considered. Many within this group likely represent the lower social-class strata within their respective communities and are likely victims of the sociological phenomenon advanced earlier; that is, victims of the frustration resulting from the conclusion that the essentials to advancement are not within their grasp without resorting to academic cheating. This conclusion is reinforced, when many find, as mentioned earlier, that the quality of the high school education they received is not sufficient to enable them to compete favorably on their own right in college level work.

Many are convinced that their aspirations exceed their abilities and resort to cheating rather than extra study or other voluntary means of reducing deficiencies.

One finds the intermediate group again produced the smallest percentage of cheaters. On the occupational scale, it was the group with semi-skilled parents who finished high school but did not attend college. It is very likely that among this number one is again confronted with the sons and daughters of the "poor but honest workers" strongly indoctrinated in the value of being respectable and doing the right thing in one's endeavor to improve upon existing station in life.¹

One must, however, go a step further in analyzing the data before one can conclude that those most likely representative of the higher social classes, that is, under this measure those with parents who attended college, did or did not engage in a higher percentage of academic cheating in the experimental situation. By combining groups one and two in Tables 5 and 6 one may compare directly those with parents who attended college and those whose parents did not. The last entry in both tables gives us these figures. The table reveals that those with parents with less education (high school or less) cheated more than those whose parents had enjoyed the added socio-economic impetus generally afforded by exposure to education above the high school level.

Warner declares that while economic mobility is important, it seems likely that more people move to higher positions through education than by any other route.² It is also likely that this transition is made more quickly through the medium of education than by any other

¹W. Lloyd Warner, The Social Life of a Modern Community, I, "Yankee City Series" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 128.

²Ibid., p. 137.

means. Therefore, it would seem likely that the higher the education level of the parents of the subjects, the more likely they are themselves considered to be among the higher social classes in their respective communities.

If the aforementioned assumption is valid, the measure in question here (education level of parents), would indicate that students from higher social-class backgrounds are not more likely to cheat in academic endeavors than are students from the lower socio-economic backgrounds.

At this point one has considered all the measures used to test the hypothesis independently and must now evaluate them from the standpoint of their interrelationship in order to arrive at a conclusion.

The hypothesis advanced was "students from higher social class backgrounds are more likely to cheat in academic endeavors than are students from lower social-class backgrounds." The hypothesis was rejected by all measures used, family income, occupation classification of parents and education level of parents. Occupation classification and education level of parents were analyzed for mothers and fathers independently. The propensity to cheat of those most likely to represent the higher social-classes, that is, those with the highest family incomes, with skilled and professional parents and with parents who attended college, did not exceed the corresponding figures for those in other groups or classifications. The hypothesis must be rejected.

CHAPTER III

THE RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGIOUS AND FAMILY TRAINING AND BASIC ORIENTATION TO CHEATING IN ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS

Religious and family training is conceived as important in its affect on a student's likelihood of engaging in cheating in academic endeavors. One's principles are not developed in a vacuum but instead developed in social environment. The intra-family relationship is an important segment of this environment.

Commitment to religious principles is spawned in the home and the intensity of this commitment is developed by the parents' disciplinary measures, attitudes toward deviant behavior and participation in religious activity. J. O. Hertzler in his paper on "Religious Institutions"¹ notes that religion in addition to integrating and socializing serves as a vehicle for social control. "Religion," he says, "aids custom and law in making anything right or wrong."

This logic was the underlying rationale for the next hypothesis dealt with in the study: those students whose background and family training reflect the most formal involvement in the religious institution are the least likely to engage in academic dishonesty.

¹J. O. Hertzler, "Religious Institutions," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 256, March, 1948, 1-13, reprinted in Contemporary Sociology, ed., Milton L. Barron (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1965), pp. 324-338.

Church Attendance and Cheating.--The students in the test group were asked to state their religious affiliation, how often they attended religious services and to characterize parents' disciplinary measures and attitude toward cheating in school work.¹

It was assumed that persons with greater commitment to religious principles would attend or participate in religious services more regularly.

Table 7 shows the incidence of cheating as related to admitted frequency of church attendance.

TABLE 7
CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND INCIDENCE OF CHEATING

Regularity	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Every Week	90	37.5	50	55.5
2-3 times a month	88	36.7	46	52.3
Once a month	14	5.8	10	71.4
Not often	48	20.0	36	75.0
Total	240	100.0	142	59.2
Combined 1 and 2	178	74.2	96	53.9
Combined 3 and 4	62	25.8	46	74.2

The first four entries in the table represent each frequency category but for analytical purposes categories one and two were combined as were categories three and four. These figures are shown in the last two entries in the table. Combined one and two represents

¹See Questionnaire, questions 7-10, Index, Supra.

those who admitted to attending religious activities two or three times a month or more. Combined three and four represents those who admitted to attending religious services once a month or less.

Frequency of church attendance in itself can hardly be said to be an accurate measure of one's religious commitment and before one assumes anything or reach any conclusions from the figures reported above let us briefly examine the concept "religion" or "religious attitudes." Dewey and Hamber state "that there is something real to which the phrase religious attitude refers is probably not open to serious question. However, just what the referent is cannot be stated at this time in any way that will secure the consensus of either laymen or social scientist."¹ With the aforementioned statement in mind, one acknowledges that religion or religious attitudes are only as important to society and the individual as the influence is upon the individual behavior, particularly influences upon behavior which foster a stable and orderly society.

The basic Christian philosophy advocated in the Catholic and Protestant faiths, which dominate the western world, frowns upon cheating in all forms. These religions also encourage active participation in various sacred services. The very essence of the Christian philosophy is judgment and salvation. Judgment is reserved to God; salvation is possible only through the individual's faith and deeds. With this in

¹Richard Dewey and W. J. Hamber, An Introduction to Social Psychology, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 261.

mind, it is assumed that those persons most committed to religious principles will both participate most frequently in religious services and will cheat less in their academic endeavors.

If the brief analysis of the affects of religion, religious attitudes and assumptions are reasonably accurate, then, an attempt to measure religious commitment in terms of frequency of participation in religious services, while not an absolute measure, is not a completely remote one either.

The results shown in Table 7 support both the hypothesis and the assumptions. Over seventy percent of those attending religious services once a month or less cheated on the experiment while roughly half of these attending religious services twice a month or more cheated on the same test when the opportunity clearly presented itself. The combined 3 and 4 entry in Table 7 representing those with frequency of attendance of once per month or less exhibited a cheating propensity of 74.2 percent. Those attending religious services twice a month or more, shown in combined one and two in Table 7, yielded a propensity of 53.9 percent--20.3 percentage points less.

The family training measure relied upon inquiries as to the student's characterization of the parent's attitude toward cheating and characterization of the parent's disciplinary measures.¹ The possible choices afforded in characterizing the parent's anticipated response to knowledge that the student had cheated on exams were: (1) Hurt, (2) Indifferent, (3) Understanding or (4) Furious. Characterization choices of disciplinary measures taken by parents were:

¹See Appendix, questionnaire.

(1) Lenient, (2) Punitive, (3) Just or (4) Corrective.

TABLE 8
PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD CHEATING

Attitude	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percent age
Indifferent	0	0.0	0	0.0
Understanding	60	25.0	32	53.3
Hurt	158	65.8	98	62.0
Furious	22	9.2	12	54.5
Total=	240	100.0	142	59.2
Indifferent or Understanding	60	25.0	32	53.3
Hurt and Furious	180	75.0	110	61.1
Total	240	100.0	142	59.2

In assigning the four categories of parent responses in Table 8, it was assumed that those parents with the greater commitment to religious principles would be "hurt" or "furious" to know that their child had cheated. Those parents less committed to religious principles were assumed to be more likely to fall into the "understanding" or "indifferent" categories. If this assumption is correct and our previous assumption as to the affect of religious principles is correct, one should find a higher incidence of cheating in the "indifferent" and "understanding" categories combined than one finds in the combined data from the "hurt" and "furious" categories.

Table 8's figures do not support such a conclusion. None of the students in the test group characterized their parent's anticipated response to cheating as "indifferent." Therefore, the figures in the

"understanding" entry represent the totals for the combined group. Twenty-five percent of the test group reported this characterization; 53.3 percent cheated. In contrast, 75 percent characterized the anticipated response of parents as "hurt" or "furious"; 61.1 percent of this group cheated on the experiment examination.

One's first response is to conclude that these figures reject the hypothesis, but before one makes any such declaration one must examine the data in the next table and then consider both Tables 8 and 9 together.

TABLE 9
DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES AND TENDENCY TO CHEAT

Disciplinary Practices	Total Number	Percentage	Number of Cheaters	Percentage
Lenient	40	16.7	24	60.0
Punitive	38	15.8	22	57.9
Just	118	49.2	72	61.0
Corrective	44	18.3	24	54.5
Total	240	100.0	142	59.2
1 and 2 combined	158	66.0	96	60.8
2 and 4 combined	82	34.0	46	56.1
Total	240	100.0	142	59.2

Table 9 gives us the cheating experience as related to the student's characterization of parent's disciplinary measures. One need not, at this point, further discuss the presumed relationship of this measure of the relationship between family training; religious attitudes and cheating. One knows that if the assumptions are rational and reasonably accurate and if this measure is to support the hypothesis in

question, one and three combined (Lenient and "just") will show a greater propensity to cheat than do two and four combined ("Punitive" and "corrective").

The figures in Table 9 do reveal that one and three combined did yield a greater cheating propensity. Sixty and eight tenths percent of that group cheated while combined two and four categories yielded a propensity of 56.1 percent. The differences evidenced in Table 8 and 9 are not nearly so dramatic as the differences that appeared in Table 7, dealing with church attendance.

Before any attempt to state conclusions with regard to the hypothesis on religious orientation and family training, possible limitation of the last two measures must be acknowledged. Both required a subjective evaluation by the student of behavior of parents. In the characterization process, there is the possibility or even likelihood that many students' characterizations represent how they would like their parents to respond or they gave a response that appears to be more acceptable to their peers. In addition, there is the problem of defining terms and classifying responses or behavior within these definitions. Chances are, within the minds of the respondents, the terms "just", "lenient", "punitive", and "corrective" have different meanings. Considering these factors, the validity of these findings is directly proportionate to the accuracy of the students' characterizations of their parents.

With the above limitations in mind, the hypothesis that "Those students whose background and family training reflect the most formal involvement in the religious institutions are the least likely to

engage in academic dishonesty" is accepted.

Students show considerable variations in intellectual capacities and in their level of achievement in academic endeavors. Students vary considerably with regard to their reasons for attending college. The extremes are the students who are purely socially oriented and the students who are purely intellectually oriented. Most students fall somewhere in between, that is, the average college student places some value on the social advantages of obtaining a college education and some students place value on the intellectual development afforded by education. An attempt is being made to measure this orientation and relate it to academic cheating.

It is hypothesized that basic orientation toward college will affect cheating behavior. Those students who are more social activities oriented are more likely to cheat than are those who are more intellectually oriented.

The students were categorized or ultimately assigned a position on the orientation scale according to the admitted weight they placed upon certain purposes for attending college and also by the admitted criteria used in evaluating their peers.¹

Ronald M. Pavalko, in his work on the sociology of education,² notes that the task of allocating persons to social roles (particularly occupational roles) has become an increasingly important role of the modern educational institution. This becomes more important as greater

¹See Appendix, Questionnaire, questions numbers 12-14.

²Ronald M. Pavalko, Sociology of Education (Itasca, Illinois: Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1968), pp. 45-49.

emphasis is placed upon college and university training as a determinant of various occupational classifications, as well as a determinant of individuals in the social-class structure.

It only stands to reason that more college students are socially oriented in terms of their evaluation of the merits of a college education. The "Ivory Tower", representing an oasis of purely intellectual discourse, as higher education was originally conceived, has given way to the technical demands of a complex society and is now, to a great measure, engaged in vocational training. One does not conclude, however, that there are not those students who are purely intellectually oriented, but instead, are conceived with finding the relationship between the student's orientation and his propensity to cheat in academic endeavors.

The first measure applied relates to the student's main purpose for attending college. Table 10 lists six purposes for securing a

TABLE 10
PERCENT CHEATING BY PURPOSE OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

Purpose	Total Number	Percent of Group	Number of Cheaters	Percent Cheating
Develop ability to get along	25	10.42	16	64.0
Vocational Training develop skills	99	41.25	64	64.4
Prepare for Marriage and family	11	4.58	8	72.7
Develop knowledge of world affairs	7	2.92	3	42.9
Develop moral, ethical values	17	7.08	9	52.9
Basic general education	81	33.75	42	51.9
1, 2 and 3 combined	135	56.25	88	65.2
4, 5 and 6 combined	105	43.75	54	51.4

college education. Each student was asked to note the purpose which most nearly represents his main purpose for attending college.

The first three purposes are not purely academic or intellectual concerns. They are social concerns. The last three purposes are academic or intellectual concerns.

No group acknowledging an intellectual main purpose for attending college recorded a higher incidence of cheating than any of the groups recording a social purpose. For independent analysis, some of the groups are rather small to reach any reasonable conclusions, however, when the three intellectual purpose groups are combined and the three social purpose groups are combined and a comparison is made, one finds that quite a large spread in cheating propensity (13.8 percentage points).

Thus far, the findings are consistent with the hypothesis. It was anticipated that those students whose main purpose for attending college was social in nature would record a higher rate of cheating.

The application of the next measure is more complex. However, if the hypothesis is to be supported and the implications of Table 10 are accurate, then similar conclusions should be apparent using other measures of commitment to the academic or social nature of the college experience.

To get the responses on which the next measure is based, students

were asked the following question: "How much does each of the following contribute to a student's standing in your own eyes?"¹ The same questions were posed from two other points of view but the students' own criteria were used for analytical purposes. Several measures were also offered but those of interest in this project were: "active social life--lots of dates", "good personality--fun" "appreciation of the arts." The first two are purely social values and the last two reflect intellectual values. The importance assigned these criteria by the students in evaluating peers is shown in Table 11 on the following page.

It is important to note that all 240 subjects gave weight to each of the criteria for the same basic data analyzed in the next table.

Separate indices of the social and intellectual values were made by combining the first two and the last two responses to each criteria. This was done by dichotomizing each item and assigning a score of "1" to high importance and "0" to low importance. Therefore, the two social criteria yield an index of social criteria with scores of "0", "1" and "2". A similar index resulted from the same treatment of the two intellectual criteria. The result is a rating of low, medium or high, depending upon the score. To explain further, "a great deal" and "a fair amount" were dichotomized, considering both of high importance therefore scoring a student "1" if he checked either of these. "Not much" and "not at all" were considered low importance and assigned a value of "0". Take a look at Table 11. If a student checked "not much" under

¹ See Appendix, Questionnaire, Question number 14.

TABLE 11
IMPORTANCE OF FOUR CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING OTHER
STUDENTS

	A Great Deal		A Fair Amount		Not Much		Not at All		Totals	
	Number	Per-centage	Number	Per-centage	Number	Per-centage	Number	Per-centage	Number	Per-centage
Active social life Lots of Fun	58	24.17	125	52.08	57	23.75	0	0	240	100.0
Good Personality Fun to be with	194	80.83	34	14.17	12	5.0	0	0	240	100.0
Interest in ideas and Intellectual Problems	160	66.67	80	33.33	0	0	0	0	240	100.0
Appreciation of the arts	80	33.33	103	42.92	46	19.17	11	4.58	240	100.0

active social life he would score "0" for that category. If one marked "a fair amount" under "good personality and fun to be with", one would score "1". Then the "0" and "1" were added getting a total of 1 or a medium on the social value scale. If the student's total is "2", the student would rate high on the social scale. If a student marked "not much" for both, his total would be "0" or low on the social scale.

Under such a scoring system the two dimensions (social and intellectual) are analytically independent in that a student may consider one of the social or intellectual criteria important, both as important or neither as important. After cross tabulation, the two dimensions appear to be empirically independent. Table 12 shows the results of the cross tabulation.

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGE CHEATING BY ORIENTATION TO
COLLEGE

Import of Social Values	Import of Intellectual Values					
	High		Medium		Low	
	Total Number	Percentage	Total Number	Percentage	Total Number	Percentage
High	37	62.1	30	63.3	41	70.7
Medium	30	53.1	22	54.5	16	62.2
Low	27	48.1	19	52.7	18	55.5

Table 12 classifies the student by criteria on both the social value scale and the intellectual value scale. The social value rating is listed on the left vertical listing and the intellectual value

rating is listed on the top horizontal listing. Those students who were high on both the social value scale and the intellectual value scale are reported in the top left figure (37); the percentage of that group that cheated is also reported (62.1 percent). Similar cross tabulation yielded the numbers and percentages reported in the other coinciding columns.

Academic dishonesty was most prevalent among those who placed the greatest value on social criteria and least prevalent among those who placed the greatest emphasis on intellectual values. Note also that, when a given fixed point on the scale is examined, the propensity to cheat increases within that range as the relative importance of intellectual values decreases. For example, all of those registered in the column on the extreme left of the Table 12 rated high on the intellectual scale; however, there is a 14 percentage point spread between the highest propensity to cheat in the column and the lowest. This is correlated with the weight placed on social values. This phenomenon repeats itself throughout Table 12; the level of cheating increases with each step from primary emphasis on intellectual values to primary emphasis on social values (lower left to upper right, diagonally). Therefore, with the incorporation of both the social and intellectual dimensions into one measure, one gets more complete assessment of the student's orientation.

It's not very difficult to speculate why cheating should be associated more closely with the "social value" oriented. The "socially oriented" are not likely to spend much time on their studies. As

several studies, notably one by Coleman, have shown,¹ all too often the values and patterns of behavior held in high esteem in the adolescent society are at odds with the primary objectives of education. Instead of rewarding academic work, adolescent society tends to reward social activity; athletics and frequent dating serve as avenues to status in the peer group.

With these findings, one has seen that students who are primarily socially oriented more often cheat. Conversely, students who are primarily oriented to the intellectual life of college are not as prone to cheat.

¹James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

A brief summary of the study recalls that the problem was to ascertain the relationship, if any, of certain socio-psychological factors in the student's life span and his propensity to cheat in academic pursuits. The variables (socio-psychological factors) were grouped under the following headings: (1) Rural or urban background, (2) social-class, (3) religious orientation and (4) value orientation to college.

The specific hypotheses tested were:

1. That students from a rural background are less likely to cheat in their academic pursuits than are students from an urban background.
2. That students from higher social-class backgrounds may, on the average, be better prepared for college work; however, these students are less committed to honesty in their academic work than are students from lower social-class backgrounds.
3. That those students whose background and family training reflect the most formal involvement in the religious institutions are the least likely to engage in academic dishonesty.
4. That those students whose basic orientation toward college is social rather than intellectual tend to cheat more in their academic pursuits.

The Procedure.--The sample for the study consisted of 240 students

attending Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

The following data were collected by means of a questionnaire:

1. Size of hometown
2. Educational level attained by parents
3. Occupation of parents
4. Income of parents
5. Church attendance prior to college
6. Characterization of parental discipline
7. Parental attitude toward cheating in college
8. Students' attitude toward cheating of peers
9. Most important purposes of college
10. The most prestigious groups on campus
11. How much the following contribute to a student's standing on campus: (a) participation in campus activities, (b) active social life, (c) good personality, (d) moral character, (e) athletic skill, (f) good grades, (g) interest in ideas and intellectual problems, and (h) appreciation of the arts.

Cheaters were detected after grading their own objective-type examination.

Findings.--The findings indicated that, contrary to hypothesis number one, academic dishonesty was more prevalent among students from rural area than it was among urban students.

The findings, as related to hypothesis number two, indicated that the propensity to cheat was higher among the lower-class group than it was among the upper-class group. The hypothesis was rejected.

On the basis of the findings, hypothesis number three was accepted. Those students whose background and family training reflected the most formal involvement in religious institutions cheated less than did those whose formal involvement was more limited.

The findings, as related to hypothesis number four, were consistent with the hypothesis. Those students whose main purpose for

attending college was intellectual rather than social were found to cheat less in their academic pursuits.

The time has come to take stock of the findings and to see what they contribute to the understanding of the problem of academic dishonesty.

As a qualification of the conclusions and inference drawn from this study, it is deemed necessary to note some of the conditions that limit the extent of legitimate generalizations. The reader should keep in mind that the sample consisted of 240 students from a predominantly Negro state college. One must remain aware that the information used to categorize or classify students according to the independent variables was obtained by self report. In self reporting, a person may, of course, lie.

Another condition worthy of noting is what might be called the "special opportunity test." The reader might keep in mind that many of those who cheated did so simply because of the inviting situation. With these limitations on the inferences and conclusions drawn in the study, a look at the conclusions is possible.

Perhaps the most alarming finding of the study concerns the prevalence of academic dishonesty on A. M. & N. College campus. Our data show that of the students tested more than half of them cheated. This is merely an estimate of the number of students who cheated, designed to emphasize the magnitude of the problem of academic cheating on the campus.

The study shows that despite the widespread concern, college cheating is not of a rare and infrequent occurrence. With this

admitted fact, one must conclude that there is an urgent need to stimulate a sense of academic integrity among students and in this way try to keep cheating at a minimum. One may also conclude that the student's sense of academic integrity will develop from several sources both before and during his college experience. Prior to college, his parents and his teachers are likely to be the primary sources of influence on his attitude toward cheating. In college, his feelings about cheating are apt to be influenced by his fellow students, particularly those closest to him. Paradoxically, felt pressures toward cheating and personal constraints against it have their roots in much the same places.

The fact that many students cheat in their academic pursuits may mean that colleges and high schools fail to provide adequate academic counselors or advisors. It may, on the other hand, mean that counselors and advisors fail to reach the students who need their help most.

One may conclude from the study that many of the students who cheat are not prepared adequately for college work, but recognize the importance of the social credit received for attending college. To the student who cheats, grades are an end in themselves.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Write in the name of your hometown _____
2. Size of hometown in which you were reared.
 - a. Less than 2,500 _____
 - b. 2,500-5,000 _____
 - c. 5,000-10,000 _____
 - d. 10,000-15,000 _____
 5. 15,000-25,000 _____
 6. 25,000-100,000 _____
 7. Over 100,000 _____
3. How far did your parents go in school?

Your father	Your mother
_____ 1. Did not finish high school	_____ 1.
_____ 2. Finished high school	_____ 2.
_____ 3. Attended college	_____ 3.
_____ 4. Finished college	_____ 4.
4. What is (or was) your father's occupation? (Be specific as possible concerning type of work, position held) _____
5. What is (or was) your mother's occupation? _____
6. About how much was your parents' income last year?

1. Less than \$3,000 _____	4. \$7,000-\$10,000 _____
2. \$3,000-\$5,000 _____	5. \$10,000-\$15,000 _____
3. \$5,000-\$7,000 _____	6. Over \$15,000 _____
7. In what religion were you brought up?

1. Protestant _____	3. Other _____
2. Catholic _____	4. None _____
8. How often did you attend religious service prior to college?
 1. Twice a week _____
 2. Twice a month _____
 3. Once a month _____
 4. Several times a year _____
 5. Never _____

9. How would you characterize the disciplinary measures taken by your parents?

1. Lenient _____ 3. Just _____
2. Punitive _____ 4. Corrective _____

10. How would your parents feel if they knew you cheated and got away with it in your college classes?

1. Hurt _____ 3. Understanding _____
2. Chip off the old block _____ 4. Furious _____

11. How do you feel when you see someone cheating on an exam?

1. Embarrassed _____ 3. Don't care _____
2. More power to him _____ 4. Wish I could _____

12. College students have different ideas about the main purpose of a college education. Statement of some purposes are listed below. Read this list, indicate which most nearly represents your main purpose for attending college.

- a. Provide vocational training;
develop skills and techniques
directly applicable to my career
- b. Develop my ability to get along with
different kinds of people
- c. Provide a basic general education and
appreciation of idea
- d. Develop my knowledge and interest in
community and world problems
- e. Help develop my moral capacities;
ethical standards and values
- f. Prepare me for a happy marriage
and family life.

13. Which of the following groups gives a student the most prestige on this campus?

1. Student government _____
2. A varsity athletic team _____
3. Social fraternity or sorority _____
4. Honor roll _____
5. Debating team _____

14. How much does each of the following contribute to a student's standing on campus? (check one on each line)

		a great <u>deal</u>	a fair <u>amount</u>	not <u>much</u>	not at <u>all</u>
a. Participation in campus activities	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Active social life - lots of fun	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Good Personality fun to be with	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Moral character	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____

		a great <u>deal</u>	a fair <u>amount</u>	not <u>much</u>	not at <u>all</u>
f. Good grades	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Interest in ideas and intellectual problems	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Appreciation of the arts	1) among the student body as a whole	_____	_____	_____	_____
	2) among the students you go around with	_____	_____	_____	_____
	3) in your own eyes	_____	_____	_____	_____

15. Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?

1. Yes _____

2. No _____

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ABSTRACT

SOCIOLOGY

MOREHEAD, QUMARE A.

An Investigation of Some of the Socio-Psychological
Correlates of Academic Cheating

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This thesis analyzes the relationship between certain socio-psychological factors evidenced in the background of a group of college students and the propensity of these students to engage in academic cheating.

The group studied represented all of the students registered in four sections of a freshman level social science class.

Background information was gathered from the students by way of questionnaires. The students were given an examination as a regular part of the social science course requirements. The papers were scored and recorded, but no marks or other evidence were placed on the papers. Later the students were asked to score their own papers. The papers were then scored again by the instructor recording not the scores the students assigned themselves but instead all instances of alterations, addition of answers previously left blank, etc.

Each student was then classified according to the data provided

by the questionnaire and an analysis of the findings was made. The bulk of the information provided herein deals with these findings and how closely they conformed with specific hypotheses advanced in the initial planning of the study.